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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ECON](#) [KCOR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S JANUARY 7 MEETING WITH IRAQI
AMBASSADOR TO THE US

REF: A. 07 BAGHDAD 3818
[1](#)B. 07 BAGHDAD 3830

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RYAN C. CROCKER FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

[1](#)1. (S) During a January 7 meeting with Ambassador Crocker, Samir Sumaidaie, the Iraqi Ambassador to the U.S., sought to establish shared U.S.-GOI priorities in the lead up to the Ambassador's upcoming testimony to Congress. The Ambassador told Sumaidaie the most significant bilateral issue at hand was negotiating the nature of the U.S.-GOI strategic relationship in the long run and that the U.S.'s original intention was to have this done by July. Sumaidaie noted that he is a supporter of a status of forces (SOFA) arrangement and has long urged his "masters" to embrace SOFA.

[1](#)2. (S) Sumaidaie said he had perceived that the U.S. wanted the U.S.-Iraqi Strategic Partnership Dialogue "Declaration of Principles for Friendship and Cooperation" document (released on November 26, 2007) "at any cost" (reftels). Noting that negotiations leading up to the declaration were tense, Sumaidaie complained that "neither side should be in that position if we're trying to put together something sustainable." The Ambassador responded that for these reasons, correct preparation for future talks on the long-term U.S.-GOI strategic relationship -- especially getting the right people at the table from the start to form a broad-based team (i.e. through the 3 1 Presidency Council plus PM framework) -- was crucial.

[1](#)3. (S) Acknowledging the Ambassador would again testify before Congress in the spring, Sumaidaie stated, "I can promise we can produce something worthwhile before that to show the American people it is worth the cost and effort to succeed." The Ambassador told Sumaidaie that besides observing political progress, people need to see that life is getting better tangibly in terms of improved services and employment, and that the GOI is taking steps to take over capacity that the Coalition is building in Iraqi institutions. Sumaidaie noted that the Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) program, along with a reversal of the social climate that had supported the insurgents, has had a positive, locally-based impact on security. Sumaidaie also noted the tribal awakening movements' contributions to improved security, and said he had urged Islamic Supreme Council of Iraqi (ISCI) Chair Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim to support sending a joint delegation of Shi'a and Sunni sheikhs to the US. (Note: A delegation of eight Sunni Anbari sheikhs participated in a two-week visit to the US as part of a State Department-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) from late October to early November 2007. End note.) He cautioned that despite security progress, "...we're still in a danger zone," and "...the question of corruption is huge and equivalent to the insurgency." Sumaidaie offered to

provide the Ambassador with reliable contacts who could provide accounts of corruption in which multiple parties split the proceeds. He said that he had discussed the corruption problem with PM Maliki during a two-hour meeting that same day (January 7).

¶4. (C) Sumaidaie also told the Ambassador there was a tendency for Iraqi delegations visiting the U.S. to bypass the Iraqi Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and that often the MFA is unaware of the visits. The Ambassador assured Sumaidaie that official delegations must present a diplomatic note from the MFA in order to receive U.S. visas, and pledged that the USG will coordinate official visits to Washington in a more transparent manner.
CROCKER